



19 April 2005

## SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

**Introduction:** This submission is from the State Council of the South Australian Association of State School Organisations Inc (SAASSO). SAASSO represents, advocates, and provides training for the governing and advising bodies of most state schools and preschools in South Australia. Due to time constraints this submission is not a compilation of responses to the terms of reference gained from affiliates of SAASSO. The following submission is a response to some of the terms of reference for this inquiry prepared in consultation with several members of the Council. The submission has been written by Dr Pam Bartholomaeus, a member of State Council of SAASSO.

### ***2. Attraction of 'high quality students, including students from diverse backgrounds and experiences'***

We suggest that it is important that students from diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to access and complete courses in teacher education, and be well prepared to guide the learning of the full range of students found in our schools. This will include mature aged students who have decided to enter education as their second or third career, and who are then well positioned to pass on their diverse experiences and insights to their students, as well as young people who have entered education courses immediately after completing their schooling.

It is viewed as important that students who excel in their tertiary studies, in courses such as Arts and Science, are encouraged to complete full degrees in these disciplines, including some completing honours degrees, as part of their preparation for teaching. Teachers with these levels of qualification in their learning areas will be equipped to bring enthusiasm and expertise in these fields into the classroom and into partnerships with other colleagues in the teaching profession. Thus education needs to be viewed as a viable profession for young people of high academic calibre, including attractive working conditions and exciting professional futures.

**5. Educational philosophy underpinning teacher 'training' and the extent to which it is informed by research**

Given the rapid developments in some academic fields, particularly those related to technology, and the changes occurring in all fields of knowledge, students studying education need to see their teacher training courses as much more than providing them with skills to work well in class. Teachers need to be encouraged, even required, to keep abreast of current research in education and pedagogy, but also of developments in the fields they teach. Where teachers are working with senior students who are planning to be studying at tertiary level in particular learning areas or disciplines within a couple of years we view the opportunities for students to have teachers who are abreast of recent developments in the field as important. Teachers of physics, economics or hospitality, for example, all need to keep abreast of changes in their teaching fields.

Thus the teacher education training courses need to be seen by teachers and students training to be teachers as the beginning stage of careers as educators. The underlying philosophy of teacher education courses needs to incorporate the view that training and development needs to be ongoing throughout the careers of all teachers. Time for updating of knowledge and for gaining higher qualifications needs to become a part of a teacher's ongoing careers and be appropriately rewarded.

SAASSO views the role of parents and the community in the setting of policy for local schools and informing teachers of the characteristics of the local community, including the aspirations of students and the community, as important. For these reasons it is suggested that it is vital teachers and student studying education have a clear understanding of the role the contributions parents and the local community can have in their schools.

**7. Examine the preparation of primary and secondary graduates to:  
(i) teach literacy and numeracy,**

It is important that all teachers are aware of and able to impart to their students all key aspects of the learning areas in which they are teaching. For teachers of students who have already achieved the first levels of literacy and numeracy the challenge is to ensure that their students are assisted to continue to learn all the aspects of literacy and numeracy specific to each learning area. Therefore it is important that all students receive the guidance and explicit teaching required for both literacy and numeracy in each learning area, particularly for students who do not come from families and communities where this knowledge is accessed in everyday life. No teachers should be allowed to assume that their students have the requisite numeracy and literacy skills and abilities required, but need to have the knowledge and ability to support the continued learning and development of their students in both literacy and numeracy.